1: Meek E, G-5 (1925-1930) 1931
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583 father of the girl then fixes a day for the capture of the bride by the bridegroom. She is sent off on some fictitious errand, is captured by the bridegroom's friend, lifted on their shoulders, and carried to his house. One of my servants witnessed a capture. The maid was sitting in the market at Zangon Katab, selling beans (by her mother's orders). Three young men suddenly appeared, and the strongest caught her by the legs and carried her off screaming, with her legs over his shoulders and her head pointing downwards. She struggled violently and bit him, and after having covered 300 yards he was glad to hand her over to his assistants. No doubt they all arrived at the husband's home very much the worse for wear. Parents state that the capture ceremony saves them the pain of parting with their daughter, but it is apparent that until comparatively recent times the capture of a bride was a real and not a mock affair. For the Katab were accustomed to capture, when they could, virgins and married women from other tribes; and it was permissible within the tribe for one clansman to capture a girl who was betrothed to a fellow clansman. If the captor belonged to the same subdivision as the fiancé he repaid the fiancé all his expenses, as custom compelled the fiancé to resign his claim for ever. But if the captor belonged to a different subdivision there would be no repayment, as the fiancé was permitted to elope later with the woman to whom he had formerly been betrothed. The capture of affianced girls has now been [178] abandoned, the tribe having come to regard it as inconsistent with modern conditions. Moreover, with the increase of the bride-price, a captor would find it difficult to repay a sub-clansman whose fiancée he had captured. The captured bride is deposited in the hut of one of the bridegroom's relatives, and 585 remains there for three nights. On the fourth night she is taken to the bridegroom's house and the marriage is consummated. If the bridegroom discovers that the bride is not *virgo intacta* he abuses her roundly, but he does not, like the Hausa, advertise 582 the fact to the world. The Katab has good reason to expect 836 virginity, for though premarital cohabitation is practised between a girl and her fiancé and other lads, with the connivance of her parents, many Katab girls find themselves married women before they have reached the age of puberty. It is revolting to our ideas, and also appears to be against the law of nature, that

1: Meek E, G-5 (1925-1930) 1931
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movement. Later, and until puberty, they discard these in favour of a girdle of thin plaited grass which is tied round the waist, the loose ends being passed between the legs from front to back and made fast at the back by being passed underneath the girdle. Married women wear on the buttocks the peculiar circular plaited tray-like adornment, resembling an inverted mushroom, which is known as the *oyam*,[1] and is characteristic of the Katab, Kachichere, Kagoro, Ataka, Kaje, Jaba, and the Ikulu section of the Kadara tribe. It is kept in position by a string passed round the waist. It is frequently smeared with red oil, and the edges may be adorned with white beads. It would appear that the *oyam* has undergone considerable evolution in recent times, and that originally it consisted of the stalk only. A small tray was then superimposed, and this has grown during the last twenty years from a diameter of six inches to twelve or even eighteen inches. The reason assigned for this change of feminine fashions is that nowadays there is no war and women do not have to run away. In war time a large *oyam* would have been an encumbrance! It is certainly an encumbrance to-day, as it has to be pushed on one side on sitting down. The original *oyam* may have had some phallic significance, but is more probably an ornate development of the ordinary buttock-covering of grass or leaves, the primary object of which is to secure decency while bending at work in the fields. An apron of leaves may be worn underneath the *oyam*, and an apron of leaves is always worn over the pubes. The leaves are changed every day, and sometimes twice a day. Katab women after giving birth tie up the abdomen with strings of rolled palm leaves. The intention is to prevent distension of the abdomen, and the custom is therefore similar to that commonly followed in Europe to-day. At night a man sleeps in his loin-covering. Women and children sleep nude. The husband may cover himself and his wife with a cloth; but, as there is always a wood fire burning through the night and the houses are designed so as to afford complete protection from the weather, blankets are not required.

Tribal Marks.—The Katab, Kagoro, Morwa, Kaje, Ikulu, and Kamantam all affect the same design of tribal markings, which are approximately as follows:—

[1] Sometimes pronounced *oyum*.

2: Gunn E-4 (no date) 1956 FF38 Katab FF38

197 Kaje, somewhat fewer with Kagoro.[3] (As will be seen, Birom and Irigwe especially show some evidence of other links with the Katab group.)

(ii) *Form of Dwelling*

342 According to Meek, a distinctive type of dwelling-house is built by all members of the Katab Group in Zaria, and by Kagoma; there is no information on Kaninkon. Meek adds that Jaba and Kagoma are the most expert builders, and suggests that the common use by Ataka and Kagoro of a more conventional type of dwelling (the round mud house, with conical thatched roof) may indicate that they have only recently adopted the style.

Meek gives detailed diagrams of the characteristic Katab house-type, which is spacious and oval in ground-plan (roughly 30 ft. by 18 ft., walls 3 to 4 ft. high); the roof does not rise to a peak at the centre, symmetrical from all angles, but slopes gently upwards to a point high above the rear of the house (away from the single small circular door), whence it falls away sharply. The interior is sub-divided into a number of compartments on the ground floor, which is a maze of cylindrical pillar-granaries entered only from the attic, and so built as to give support to the soaring roof. The floors are made more durable by having pieces of broken pottery beaten [356] into the surface and patterns of cowries are sometimes inserted. The walls may be smeared with red earth mixed with *dafara* [Hausa, a particular vegetable juice] which prevents vermin from ascending to the lofts where property is stored.[4]

361 Throughout the area there has been the usual dispersal of settlement incident to shifting cultivation. Formerly, Kagoro and Moroa most notably maintained in-712 accessible hill-top villages protected by spiny euphorbia ("cactus") hedges, and Kagoma (probably also Kaje and Jaba) had fortified hill-top retreats; but these appear largely to have been abandoned under British Administration.

(iii) *Dress, Adornment and Tribal Markings*

291 The unique article of dress which defines the Katab Group is the mushroom-shaped "lumbar ornament" worn by married women,[4] called *oyam* or *oyam* by Meek, *kunnok* by W. M. Hynes. The earliest available photographs of it are those ● 178 taken by Tremearne among Kaje and Kagoro (*c.* 1909) in *Tailed Head-Hunters of Nigeria*. Comparison of these (or Temple's descriptions) with those of Meek some twenty years later reveals a striking change, from a thick wad of palm-fibre bound in the form of a blunt truncated cone, to a still bulkier article, now woven of fibre in the form of a mushroom, hung by the "stem" from a cord about the waist.[5] The remarkable thing is that changes in style seem to have affected all tribal sections of the Katab Group about equally; furthermore there seems to have been at no time any distinction in dress according to generation.[6] Bunches of leaves are worn in addition to the *oyam*.

[3] Superficial comparison with a vocabulary of Afusare shows, similarly, a clear though slight connection with both Kaje and Kagoro. M. G. Smith remarks that a Kagoro acquaintance on his first trip to Jos was able to converse with Afusare there. Greenberg, in a personal communication, stresses the interrelationship among Kaje, Irigwe, and Afusare.

[4] The Irigwe alone among their neighbours have adopted from the Katab peoples this style of house, but they, like Ataka and Kagoro, do not use it to the exclusion of the ordinary small round house.

[4] Kagoma women excepted; there is no information about Kaninkon.

[5] A possible clue to the form taken by the *oyam* in recent times is a style common in the [771] western (nearest) sector of the Birom tribe (the vicinity of Hos): women of that area wear a circular tray of palm-fibre, but suspended from the edge rather than from the centre. Connections between the Birom of this area and their Katab neighbours have already been noted.

[6] At the present time, there are certain major differences which effectively set apart the women of one tribe from those of another: the absence or presence, and amount, of white beadwork, the diameter of the flat tray, and the length of the "stem," among the more prominent. According to Meek, the *oyam* is "frequently smeared" with red ochre: to-day the practice appears to be universal.

together in one household then it was probable that they were farming their lands together though this was not an infallible sequitur. Where, however, a man was listed as a separate householder it could be categorically stated that in that case the family lands had been divided and the householder was living and farming on his own with no other relations than his children. The tax lists for 1947 shew that in no case were more than six adult males living and farming together. One or two cases were found of six adult males farming together; a small number of cases of four or five; but the vast majority of compounds consisted of no more than one, two or three adult males. The average number of adult males per compound is 1.6 and the average number of persons eight.

23. Unfortunately the tax lists for the pre-war years have all been destroyed and an interesting comparison has been lost. A few of the tax sheets for 1939 were found and the same average number of 1.6 males per compound was found shewing that the breakdown has existed for a number of years. It is universal throughout the district. Discussion with the Elders confirmed this situation.

24. The extent of the breakdown appears to be greater here than in the adjoining Katab district of the Emirate. The reasons for it lie in the circumstances set out in paragraph 20 above, *i.e.*, the kindred holding concept was undermined from the very start owing to the fragmentation of the kindred lands. Another contributory factor is that the advent of peace and security has removed the sanctions which formerly made group or communal living if not absolutely necessary then advisable in the extreme. With the perpetual threat of a Fulani raid it would have needed a major family convulsion to cause a man to leave the security and mutual protection afforded by communal living. Nowadays the merest family tiff will result in the individual demanding his portion of the family lands and going off to farm on his own.

25. It cannot be said, at the moment, that the breakdown has occasioned any grave *local* social problem. The lands that were so precariously available to the fathers and grandfathers of the present generation were more than ample for their greatest needs had they been allowed to farm with security. These lands have been divided and sub-divided; but there still remains to the present day users a sufficiency for their needs and something to spare. It is true that the various fields are widely scattered. But, points out the Elder, this fragmentation is something that the Kagoro has always been accustomed to and presents no novel feature

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178 423 at all. Formerly the Fulani necessitated the practice—now it is their own children. The resultant situation is very much the same.

Alienation of rights in land.

425 26. Since land hunger has not, as yet, become a personal problem of the individual Kagoro there has not been, so far, any great development in individual transactions involving land. As far as could be ascertained only three transactions would be recognised by local custom—exchange, loan and a form of pledge. Sale was not acknowledged—once its implications had been understood (paragraph 6 above).

Sale.

425 427 [191] 27. In view of previous statements on this subject I give in detail my investigations. The District Head is a Kagoro educated at a Mission School. He has a fair command of Hausa in which language the interrogations were conducted. A number of the Elders present also had a knowledge of Hausa. In reply to the question—was sale (*saye da sayarwa*) of land practised and acknowledged by the Kagoro?—the answer was yes! Several of the Elders nodded confirmation. Details of such a transaction were then asked for. A man desirous of farming a particular field would approach the ' owner ' and offer him a goat. If the ' owner ' of the field accepted the goat then the man who had given him it would be permitted to go on farming that field until either the ' owner ' claimed the field back—in which case he would return the goat to its former owner—or the borrower decided to vacate—in which case he could claim his goat back. Any of the goat's offspring would belong to the lender of the farm. Never more than one goat would be given however large the field might be. No other payment either in money or kind is involved. If the goat dies another goat would be substituted—but the goat was always returnable on demand by either party to the transaction. The transaction was terminable by either party at will except that the borrower of the farm would be allowed to reap what he had sowed.

28. When it was pointed out that the ' sale ' of land involves the complete and *permanent* relinquishment by the holder of all his or any would-be inheritor's rights in the land it was strenuously and vehemently stated that no such transaction could possibly take place. The idea was absurd. Whatever an individual himself might have done with or received in exchange for his land, his son or those with the reversionary hereditary rights in the land would always and at any time be competent to take back the land on handing over to the ' outsider ' whatever had been given in exchange. It was obvious that the concept of outright ' sale ' in respect of land did not exist. All that an individual could do with his land—other than farm or build on it—was to alienate it *temporarily* in one or the other

Jaba

61. The truth of the matter is as stated in paragraph 44 above. The Jaba who accepted the Fulani domination retained their tribal lands. They still have them. And there are acres and acres to spare. Those who resisted were squeezed into the remnants of land to the South where there was little or any to spare. Pressure of population, incipient land hunger and the spirit of independence, which must have been there, have led to the individualisation of the Jaba Kwoi and accelerated the breakdown to individual tenure. The youths would not go off to the mines if there was abundance at home on the lands available to them. Their relations across the border have had none of this to cope with. Nor did they have their social structure rudely broken up and disintegrated.

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62. The fact remains, however, that within the Emirate the kindred concept remains and is still operative.

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Kindred holding of lands still existent.

63. Amongst the Kachia Jaba the land pattern is similar to that of the Jaba Kwoi, *i.e.*, compact hamlets or villages standing in the middle of their farmlands and outside these farmlands the villages "spare" lands. The Kagoro, Kaje and Katab do not live together in villages but prefer the small scattered hamlet and isolated farms. Amongst the Kagoro all lands were "allocated"; even the spare bush. Such is not the case with the Kachia Jaba; nor would it be the case, probably, amongst the Jaba Kwoi—had they any spare lands. The spare lands form a general pool for the particular unit within which they lie, *i.e.*, for the kindred. Any member of the kindred has a right to take up sufficient of the spare lands to meet his needs; but he must first of all obtain the Village Head's consent. A Wenyum man has the right to take up the lands he needs in the Wenyum Unit and, on allocation, the lands become inheritable by his kith and kin. A man of the Dun kindred who desired to take up spare lands in the Wenyum Unit would only be loaned the lands and it would always remain a loan. It would never become land of the Dun kindred. A Wenyum man who had inherited or been allocated land in the Wenyum Unit would be entitled to loan it to someone else, either from within or outside his kindred, without asking for anyone's consent. But he could neither give it nor sell it to anyone else, *i.e.*, he could do nothing that would deprive the kindred of its ultimate rights in the land.

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64. Though the normal procedure is for farms to remain undivided until the father's death nevertheless, if a son demanded it and was married and of sufficient standing, the father would have to give him his share of the family holding. Women have no share or rights in a farm. Both farm and fallow are divided up; but there is no question of unallocated lands being divided up. A farm once

Sub-division and inheritance.

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probably explains why the Katab scene consists of so many isolated single compounds widely scattered throughout the country side. There are no large villages or small towns. 241 423 361

84. There are few aspects of the Kaje land tenure system which would not be familiar to either the Katab or the Kagoro. There is the same gradual breakdown to an individual basis—though perhaps not to the same extent; the same denial to the individual of any right to alienate permanently lands which he has inherited and is expected to pass on to his inheritors; the acknowledgement of a system of loaning with the token brewing of beer—a social obligation; the same attitude to the building of a house on borrowed lands and the same grace period for farming after he has removed his house. Pledge is not known. Kaje tenure. 423 178

85. The principal deviation from the Katab is in the vesting of the final authority in land matters. Here the Kajé system is almost identical with the Jaba of Kachia. The kindred as distinct from the tribal elders claim the final say. Authority in land matters. 184 423

86. Details of the kindreds and the territorial village units are:— 612 621 614

(*i*) Tsok—Fadan Kaje
Fadia
(*ii*) Dwan—Zuturu
Zonkwa
(*iii*) Turun—Firman
(*iv*) Tadon—Madakia
(*v*) Bin—Suriyan
(*vi*) Afwun—Afana
Ungwar Rimi
Marsah
Kamerun

[It is of interest to note, in parenthesis, that my anthropology may be a bit wrong. On returning from the area the following reference from an old report by Brice-Smith was discovered (1922):—

" The tribe is still in the family stage of evolution. As soon as an individual has made his position sufficiently strong by marriage he moves off and starts a hamlet by himself and no longer recognises the tribal head ".

He correlates the ' clans ' and territorial units as:—

Bainduang (leopard totem)—*Zonkwa*, *Zuturu*, Kurmin Bi. Madaichi
Baintso (crocodile totem)—*Fadan Kaje*, G. Tsofuwa, Rumfa, Kafo, Zagwon, *Fadiya*